

19th  
cent  
RA644  
S6C65  
1882



[CIRCULAR NO. 19]

---

---

TO THE  
HEALTH OFFICERS,  
OF THE  
TOWNS OF CONNECTICUT,  
ON THE  
PREVENTION AND CONTROL  
OF  
SMALL POX,

ISSUED BY THE

Connecticut State Board of Health.

---

---



In view of the destructive character of small pox, now raging as an epidemic in Canada, and the danger to which all communities in New England are exposed by reason of the facilities of travel and the freedom of intercourse of Canadians in the States, extraordinary vigilance is called for to prevent the introduction of the disease within our borders, and prompt and decisive action to control it if it gains admission.

The State Board of Health urgently calls upon the responsible authorities in every town in the State to provide against this threatened danger.

It would advise every local board of health to be immediately convened for the purpose of considering this emergency, and being prepared to meet promptly and effectively every appearance of the disease, and by such decisive measures as the law directs controlling it or preventing its invasion.

The states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York, which border on Canada, are vigilant to prevent the passage of persons carrying the contagion. All passengers entering these States from Canada are subject to a rigid inquiry and inspection for evidences of vaccination, and they and their baggage are treated as each case requires.

New Hampshire has adopted a very efficient system, entitled "Railway Inspection Service, State Board of Health, New Hampshire."

Every passenger from Canada entering that State is subject to inspection, and given a ticket, on which is printed, in both English and French, that he is to retain it until taken by a health officer at his destination, and that it will save the bearer the trouble of unnecessary inspections.

On the margin, however, is a cipher device, of which every health officer in the State has the key, by which he can read whether the passengers came from an infected or uninfected locality, whether vaccinated, or not, and if he has baggage.

At every manufacturing town in New Hampshire on a railway, the health officer is at the station to receive all who get off. If their tickets show that they come from Montreal, or

other infected places, they are at once taken to fumigating rooms, where their clothing and baggage are fumigated, and if they have not been vaccinated they immediately have the operation performed.

New Hampshire not only attempts the protection of her own citizens in this manner, but has been considerate and kind enough to send the keys to these tickets to all the larger towns of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, so that the health officers in these cases can also take proper precautions against the spread of the contagion from such sources. But such precautions require organized vigilance, which every town Board of Health has the power to exercise, and the obligation to exercise in every place in intercourse with Canada.

Wherever, therefore, in the State of Connecticut, no town Board has yet been organized, the State Board would strongly urge the importance of immediately organizing such a board under the law. The advantages of such an organization are too obvious to need argument.

It makes possible instant and effective action, where delay would be dangerous.

The time to quench a fire is when it begins. It is better, still, to prevent its beginning at all.

The following are the laws of the State of Connecticut which apply in the present exigency:

They will be found in the General Statutes of Connecticut in the Revision of 1875; pages 258, 260-261.

The following are the special enactments relating to the Constitution of Town Boards of Health and to the protection of the public from SMALL-POX AND OTHER CONTAGIOUS DISEASES:

SEC. 1. The justices of the peace and selectmen in each town, and such reputable physicians resident in said town as shall be chosen for that purpose by said justices and selectmen, shall constitute a board of health, and have all the power necessary and proper for preserving the public health and preventing the spread of malignant diseases therein, and may appoint its president and such health officers or health committees as it may deem expedient, and delegate to them any of its powers; and the members present at any meeting convened as the board

shall direct, or as by statute provided, shall be a quorum for business; and may appoint a clerk, who shall be sworn and shall record the acts of such board.—*Revised Statutes, page 258, Section 1, as amended March 15, 1882.*

SEC. 16. The board of health in any town may order any person whom they have reasonable ground to believe to be infected with any malignant, infectious or contagious disease, into confinement in any place to be designated by said board, there to remain so long as said board shall judge necessary.

SEC. 17. Boards of health may adopt such measures for the general vaccination of the inhabitants of their respective towns as they shall deem proper and necessary to prevent the introduction or arrest the progress of small pox, and the expenses, in whole or in part, of such general vaccination shall, upon their order, be paid out of the town treasury.

SEC. 18. Every person who shall refuse to be vaccinated, or prevent any person under his care or control from being vaccinated, on application being made by any member of the board of health, or by a physician employed by the board of health for that purpose, unless, in the opinion of another physician, it would not be prudent on account of sickness, shall forfeit five dollars to the town where the offence shall be committed.

SEC. 19. Every person who shall violate any provision of the preceding sections of this chapter, or legal order of a board of health, for which no other penalty is provided, shall be fined not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisoned not exceeding six months, or both.—*See amendment March 15, 1882.*

The Board respectfully requests that every occurrence of small pox be promptly reported to its Secretary at New Haven, with as full and definite information as possible.

Copies of this and of the other circular on small pox will be sent on application.

C. A. LINDSLEY,

*Secretary.*